

CLAIMS

1. A method for establishing a plurality of data sharing connections in a data communication service among a plurality of users who are concurrently communicating on a first communication service, each user respectively associated with one member of a plurality of user accounts, said data communication service distinct from the first communication service, and the method comprising the steps of:
- a) associating a session record with at least two user accounts, each user account identifying one member of the plurality of users communicating with one another on said first communication service, the user account selected from the group consisting of permanent and temporary user accounts,
 - b) identifying said session record for at least one data sharing connection between a software process acting on behalf of a terminal device on said data communication service and a session manager, the association based upon an account identifier provided through said software process and corresponding to at least one user of the terminal, thereby establishing the data sharing connection for the at least one software process,
 - c) associating the session record with information to be conveyed across said data communication service to the at least one terminal device,
 - d) sending the information over the at least one data sharing connection, each connection associated with said session record.
- whereby a plurality of users will receive the information sent by at least one user over the data communication service while they remain connected to each other on the first communication service.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of specifying data sharing privileges for the at least two users of said data communication service such that the

- 450 at least one of the users can send and receive information and the at least one of the other users can only receive information.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of specifying data sharing attributes for at least one user account of said data communication service such that the information is transformed in accord with said attributes.
- 455 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of ending the data sharing connection for the at least one terminal on the data communication service when the user of said terminal is no longer communicating over the first communication service.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein a communication appliance used with the first communication service is distinct and independent of the terminal device used with the data communication service.
- 460 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the first communication service interconnects a plurality of networks designed for voice communication.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the data communication service is accessed through a plurality of networks designed for data communication.
- 465 8. The method of claim 7 wherein each member of said plurality of networks is selected from the group consisting of television broadcast networks, wireless packet networks, dial-up data networks, and broadband data networks.
9. The method of claim 7 wherein the data communication service is a television narrowcast service transmitting signals for display on a television a over a digital network selected from the group consisting of a plurality of cable networks, satellite television networks, and low power wireless television networks.
- 470 10. The method of claim 9 wherein said account identifier is automatically provided through the data communication service when the television is tuned to a specific channel
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11. The method of claim 1 wherein said account identifier is entered manually through said software process acting on behalf of a terminal on the data communication service before said software process communicates with the session manager.
12. The user account of claim 1 wherein said user account is identified by at least one
480 account identifier, said account identifier formed by combining components selected from the group containing telephone numbers, email addresses, instant messaging addresses, account logins, geographic addresses, personal identification numbers, spoken utterances, handwriting, and biometric characteristics.
13. An system for sharing information on a data communication network based on a
485 concurrent connection among a plurality of users communicating with one another on a first communication network, the data communication network distinct from the first communication network, comprising:
- a) a plurality of terminal devices for retrieving multimedia information from a plurality of information sources on said data communication network,
 - 490 b) account management means for determining a user account for each of at least two members of said plurality of users who are communicating with one another on the first communication network, the user account selected from a group consisting of permanent and temporary user accounts,
 - c) first means for associating a session identifier with the at least two user accounts,
495 each user account identified by a user account identifier,
 - d) terminal software means for establishing a connection on a data communication network between at least one terminal device and a session manager, said connection providing an account identifier, thereby establishing session access for the at least one terminal device,
 - 500 e) second means for selecting information to be transmitted on the data communication network, and
 - f) session manager means for routing the selected information over the data sharing connections to the terminal devices associated with the same session identifier,

whereby information can be shared among said plurality users of a data
505 communication network, while the users communicate on the first communication
network.

14. the method of claim 13 wherein at least one user of said plurality of users is an
automated interactive response system,, responsive to an input signal from at least
one human user communicating over the first communication network and the
510 interactive response device sending responses to the at least one human user over the
data communication network.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising a means for specifying bandwidth and
display parameters for at least one terminal device of said plurality of terminal
devices so that the shared information is displayed appropriately on the at least one
515 terminal device.

16. The method of claim 13 further comprising a means for de-activating the session
identifier after each of the users of the plurality of users associated with the session
identifier have terminated their respective connections on the first communication
service.

520 17. The method of claim 16 further comprising a means of providing access to a history
of the information shared, the history comprising instructions for retrieving the
information shared over the data communication service.

18. The method of claim 16 further comprising means for re-activating the session
identifier when at least two users of the plurality of users associated with the de-
525 activated session identifier have re-established communication through the first
communication service, each user identifying a user account that was associated with
the de-activated session identifier.

19. The method of claim 13 wherein means for selecting the data to be shared is a
plurality of software algorithms executing on a computer processor.

530 20. A method for sharing information on a data network, the method comprising the steps
of:

535 providing information across a data connection to a plurality of recipients, in response to said recipient also participating in a voice connection, wherein each of the recipient is identified by a user account activated when establishing said voice connection and independently identified when establishing said data connection, the data connection distinct from the voice connection.